HOLMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – SPELLING BEE RULES

1. The pronouncer will make every effort to pronounce the words according to the correct pronunciation markings in the dictionary used by the judges.
2. In competition, after the pronouncer gives the speller a word, the speller will be encouraged to pronounce the word before spelling it and after spelling it. The judges may not disqualify a speller for failing to pronounce the word either before or after spelling it.
3. The speller may ask the pronouncer to say the word again, define it, use it in a sentence, provide the part of speech, and/or provide the language of origin. The pronouncer shall grant all such requests until the judges agree that the word has been made reasonably clear to the speller. The judges may disqualify any speller who ignores a request to start spelling.
4. The role of the pronouncer is (1) to correctly pronounce the word and (2) to give a sentence, definition, and other information about the word at the speller’s request. The role of the judges is to determine whether the contestant has spelled and punctuated the word correctly. The role of the speller is (1) to gather as much information as possible to help spell the word correctly and (2) to spell the word correctly.
5. Having started to spell a word, a speller may stop and start over, retracing the spelling from the beginning. In retracing, however, there can be no *change of letters* of their sequence from those first pronounced. *If letters or their sequence is changed in the respelling, the speller will be eliminated*.
6. The preliminary competition shall be conducted in rounds. There will be 2 finalists and 1 alternate per classroom. In determining which two spellers advance to the final competition, rounds will be completed until there are two spellers. If the number of spellers is reduced to two midway through a round, those remaining two in that round still must spell their respective words properly to advance to the finals (to be deemed a finalist, all spellers must have spelled the same amount of words). The alternate is determined by the last remaining speller from the previous round (if there were more than 1 remaining from this previous round, a spell off should occur to determine the alternate).
7. Upon missing the spelling of a word, a speller immediately drops out of the competition, except when the number of spellers is reduced to two as described below. The next word on the pronouncer’s list is given to the next speller.
8. This rule addresses the procedure that should be followed during the finals at the end of the spelling bee. When the number of spellers is reduced to two, the elimination procedure changes. At that point, when one speller misspells a word, the other speller shall be given an opportunity to spell that same word. If the second speller spells that word correctly, plus the next word on the pronouncer’s list, then the second speller shall be declared the champion.   
   If one of the last two spellers misspells a word and the other speller, after correcting the error, misspells the new word, then the misspelled new word shall be referred to the other speller. If this other speller then succeeds in correcting the error and spells the next word on the list, then he or she shall be declared the champion.  
   If both spellers misspell the same word, both shall continue in the competition, and the one who first misspelled the word shall be given a new word to spell.  
   The winner will not be declared until he or she corrects the misspelling of the other speller and then correctly spells the next word on the list. If during the final round competition, no winner is determined after five rounds, then both participants will be deemed co-winners.
9. The judges will have a dictionary available for consultation, and it shall serve as the final authority for the spelling of words. If more than one acceptable spelling is listed for a word that the pronouncer has provided for the speller to spell, any of these spellings shall be accepted as correct. Spellings which are considered archaic or nonstandard shall not be accepted as correct.
10. If a word has one or more homonyms, the pronouncer will indicate which word is to be spelled by using the word in a sentence. For example, if the word to be spelled is “hour,” the pronouncer will use the word “hour” in a sentence with the warning, “listen closely to how this word is used in the sentence,” or a similar warning. This is to distinguish the word from its homonym, “our”. If the pronouncer fails to give this warning, either spelling of the word (the intended word or its homonym) will be accepted as correct.
11. The judges are in complete control of the competition. Their decision shall be final on all questions. The judges will have discretion to make any necessary accommodations for participants with a recognized disability.
12. All participants will have fun. All supporters of participants will remember that this is an elementary school spelling bee.